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STATUS OF SOVIET ARMS AID TO CYPRUS

In mid-August, the USSR reportedly rejected a request from Cyprus for additional arms aid, ostensibly because the Greek Cypriots still had not assimilated the Soviet equipment -- valued at more than \$14 million -- already delivered. ¹¹ The weapons included medium tanks, artillery, motor torpedo boats, and personnel carriers. In spite of NATO pressures in early 1965 to halt such deliveries, SAM equipment has also been delivered to the island. Although Moscow was (eager) to provide arms aid in an *encourage Greek Cypriot independence and to* effort to *exacerbate* Turkish-Greek differences over the Cyprus issue, publicly it has attempted to minimize its role in the supply of weapons to Cyprus by transshipping the equipment through the UAR. Currently, the bulk of the Soviet weapons is being operated by Greek personnel (described by Athens as army veterans hired by the Greek Cypriots) and training in the operation of Soviet weaponry continues in the UAR and on Cyprus. Only the actual SAM's and some associated gear remain to be delivered from the UAR.

I. Background of Soviet Arms Aid to Cyprus

Following the outbreak of hostilities between the Greek and Turkish communities on Cyprus in late 1963, Archbishop Makarios sought sources for arms aid. After his requests were rejected by Western suppliers, he turned to the USSR in March 1964. Despite initial objections of the

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Greek government against the introduction of Soviet weaponry on the island and an attempted veto of the agreement by the Turkish Cypriot Vice President of Cyprus, an agreement for arms aid was signed in Moscow by representatives of the Soviet and Cypriot governments on 30 September 1964.

Soviet policy in the eastern Mediterranean area has aimed primarily at reducing the cohesion and effectiveness of the southern flank of NATO. In an effort to ^{exacerbate} ~~exacerbate~~ Turkish-Greek differences over the Cyprus issue ^{complicating} ~~and to~~ complicate relations with their NATO allies, Moscow injected itself into the dispute by its willingness to provide arms aid to the Greek Cypriots. Publicly it has attempted to minimize its role in this arms supply, however, by using the United Arab Republic (UAR) as an intermediary. *2*

II. The September 1964 Arms Agreement

A. Value and Terms

Although few details of the 1964 agreement have been published, the overall value of the agreement is estimated at \$14 million and the credit, \$7 million (assuming a discount of 50 percent from list prices). *3*

The credit probably was for a period of 15 years at an annual rate of interest of two percent.

Repayment presumably will

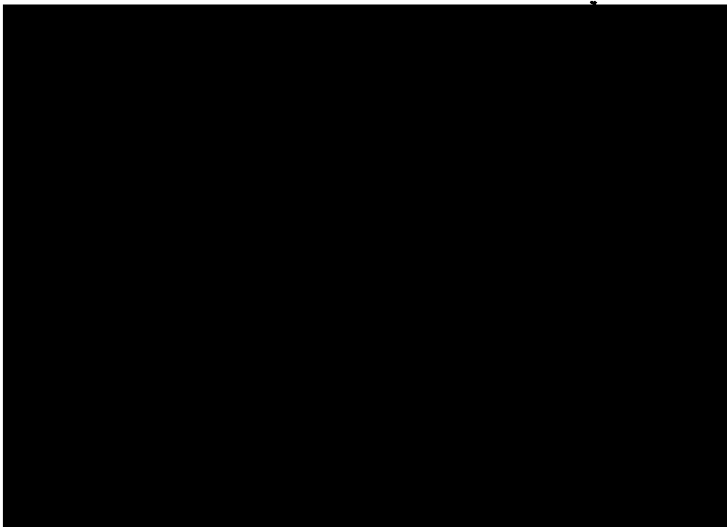
be made in hard currency or in commodities at the option of Nicosia.

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Technical assistance -- Greek and Greek Cypriot personnel training in the UAR under Soviet or Egyptian instructors -- probably also was included in the agreement.

B. Equipment

The bulk of the equipment under the 1964 agreement is believed to have been delivered and deployed on Cyprus. The equipment included the following:



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The SAM equipment provided Cyprus by the USSR is the most advanced item in the aid package. Deliveries of SAM equipment began in late February 1956, and by the middle of March three Greek ships carrying SAM components, but no missiles, had unloaded at Cyprus ports. Diplomatic reaction by Greece's NATO allies caused the deliveries to stop abruptly in mid-March and some Greek ships destined for Cyprus returned to Alexandria and unloaded SAM equipment. Subsequently, a group of 30 Greek military personnel (reportedly only one of three Greek groups) returned from Cyprus to Greece. The Cypriot Minister of Interior Geokatzis reportedly stated that, if Greece refused to send SAM crews, Cyprus would get them from the UAR or the USSR.

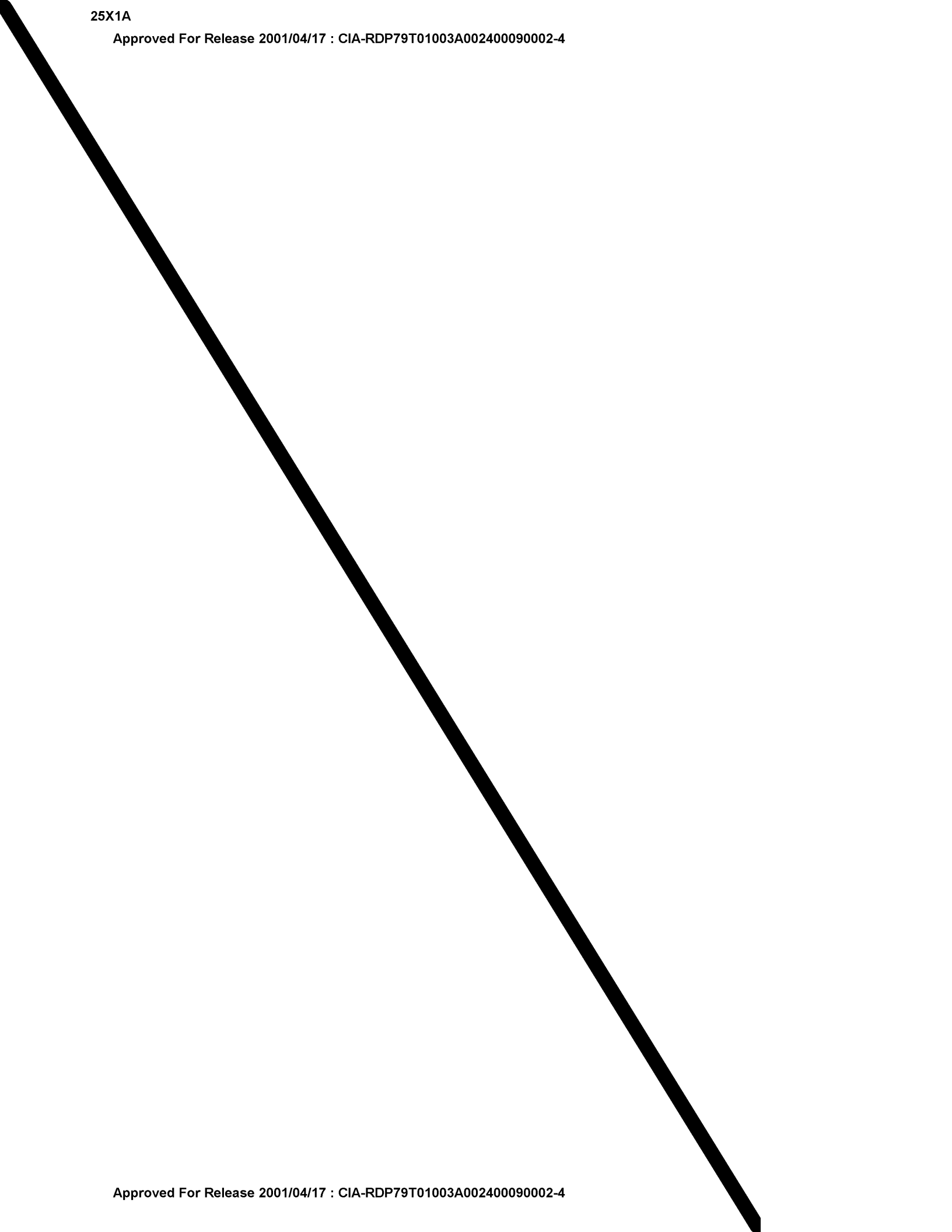
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In early April Mikoyan stated that in the absence of a UN or

NATO guarantee against a Turkish attack, it intended to proceed with plans to make its SAM system operational. Greece apparently relented and the 30-man group returned to Cyprus en route to the UAR for training. Shortly thereafter, deliveries of military equipment were again started. Greek freighters delivered five military cargoes -- reportedly including SAM gear -- during the period mid-April through early June. If these reports are accurate, the bulk of the SAM equipment reportedly scheduled for delivery to Cyprus probably now is on the island. To date, however, there is no reliable information indicating that some of the actual missiles are on Cyprus or that SAM sites are under construction.

III. Conclusion

Soviet arms aid policy in Cyprus has served Communist objectives well. The introduction of Soviet arms has not only contributed substantially to the unrest and conflict on the island but it has also made the USSR a critical factor in a dispute where otherwise it would have had little influence. More important, Soviet arms aid to Cyprus has served the Communist long term objective of weakening the southern flank of NATO by exacerbating relations between Turkey and Greece.



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